

# COVID-19 Saliva Testing for Child Care Staff: Program Guide for Coordinators

12/22/2020

The state is continuing to prioritize low-barrier, free testing opportunities for child care providers. As COVID-19 continues to spread, Minnesota is continually expanding testing options and working to remove barriers so each and every Minnesotan can access testing. Experts agree that testing is a critical part of the process to identify, contain and stop the spread of the virus – this is especially true of younger Minnesotans who are more likely to be asymptomatic (i.e., have no symptoms) and spread the disease unknowingly.

Child care providers have been on the front lines since the beginning of this pandemic - coming to work every single day and risking virus exposure to care for and educate our youngest Minnesotans and respond to community needs. State leaders want to ensure that child care providers and staff are prioritized for testing among those people who are asymptomatic.

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# About COVID-19 testing

## What screening COVID-19 testing means for child care

- All staff are encouraged to be tested regularly, regardless of symptoms. In addition to this onsite program, testing resources (community sites and at-home ordering) are available at [mn.gov/covid19](https://mn.gov/covid19).
- These tests will be free; if insurance does not cover testing, the state will cover the costs.
- Testing is optional and **not** a requirement to operate your program.
- Staff test results are provided to the employee.
- This testing program depends on continued funding.
- The duration of this testing program depends on continued funding.

## Considerations and implications for child care

- **Awaiting Results and Quarantine:** Staff/providers who participate in COVID-19 testing and have no symptoms and no known exposure **can continue to work while awaiting test results**, and it would not impact program operation.
- **Results and Program Impact:** Test results from state saliva testing sites are typically available within 48 hours of being received. Child care providers should consider utilizing testing at the end of the week (Thursday), so as to obtain the results before the next week of care; if a test is positive, the weekend would then apply to the quarantine period for of close contacts in the classroom.
- **Participating Programs:** For programs that wish to participate in the onsite screening testing program with regular staff testing and have a majority of staff participate, the state can provide language that can be shared with families electronically or printed to note your commitment to health and safety.

## Things to remember

- Staff with symptoms or who have been exposed to COVID-19 should not report to work and be in quarantine according to public health guidance.
- Test results are provided via email or phone - be sure to provide an email you check regularly. Test results are usually emailed within 48 hours after the lab receives the test.
- If your test result is positive for COVID-19, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) will call you with health information for you and the people who live with you. It is important to answer the call from the health department, so you can learn how to keep yourself, your family, and your community safe.
- Your information is confidential unless you give permission for us to share your name. In rare circumstances, MDH may need to share your name with your workplace, school, or child care to protect the health and safety of others. MDH will attempt to contact you prior to doing so.
- Child care guidance is available at [mn.gov/childcare](https://mn.gov/childcare).

# Implementing a COVID-19 saliva screening program

This program provides child care providers with regular saliva COVID-19 testing. The program trains an onsite staff member to manage the program - receive test kits, oversee the testing onsite every other week, and mail the kits back to lab.

The onsite testing coordinators will take a virtual training on how to supervise the saliva testing with a support line and Zoom room and there will be question and answer sessions. Homeland Health Specialists nurses will be available to consult with your child care program for the first round of testing and answer any questions.

- **Identify a Testing Coordinator.** Each site has a site contact responsible for their screening program. This person is responsible for supervising the testing moving forward and mailing the test kits back every other week. Identify this person and any alternates prior to the onsite, first day of testing. When thinking about appointing this role, consider individuals who are:
  - Energetic problem-solvers
  - Comfortable with technology, including using smart phones or tablets
  - Responsible and dependable
  - They do **not** need to have to have experience with health care or medical services
- **Testing tips for staff.** Prior to testing beginning, please inform staff about how and where they will go for the onsite testing. Staff who would like to receive the test should:
  - Hydrate up to 30 minutes prior to testing
  - Not eat, drink, smoke, or chew gum 30 minutes prior
  - Have their smartphone available during testing (site coordinators can also use a computer or tablet at the site)
- **Collection.** After the testing, complete the testing [Collection Report](#) to provide information about kits used and feedback on the testing experience. If it is your third round of testing or you are out of your kits on a later round, you will also need to complete the next ordering form with information on:
  - Number of kits wanted for each round of testing (every other week)
  - Address and contact information for the onsite testing coordinator who will receive, and drop-off completed kit

## Getting set up

Thank you for taking on the role of testing coordinator! Your efforts keep your colleagues informed about their health and can help us reduce the spread of COVID-19 and keep child care settings as safe as possible. After you receive training, use this guide as a reference while you manage the program.

- **Set a schedule.** Test staff every other week. We recommend picking a standard day every other weekly same day each week. *In the future, it is possible the state will need to script testing days in the future of this program based on demand and lab capacity.*
- **Testing tip.** Consider testing on Thursdays or Fridays to get results before the next week. If a test is positive, the weekend would apply to the quarantine and if applicable, classroom closure.
- **Receiving your test kits.** We will mail testing kits to your child care with at least one month's worth of tests for participating staff members.
- **Needing support.** There is both a Zoom room and dedicated hotline number for support:
  - a. A Vault RN available in a Zoom room for questions **Monday – Friday: 6:30am-9:30am**
    - i. Zoom link: <https://vaulthealth.zoom.us/j/5330756419>
  - b. Hotline number to reach a Vault CX representative **Monday – Friday 9am-5pm**
    - i. (929) 205-6741

## Step-by-step guide for testing

**Step 1:** Ensure staff have a smartphone/tablet with internet access and have not had anything to eat, drink, smoke, or chewed gum in the 30 minutes prior

**Step 2:** Have staff go to [COVID.VLT.CO](https://COVID.VLT.CO) on their smartphone/tablet

- *Note:* Participants who used this same device to order a saliva test from Vault through the testing program this fall may be automatically redirected to that site, which would cause an error. If this happens, advise the participant that they should open a private browser on their device or manually type the website again to confirm it is directing to the correct site.

**Step 3:** Staff log in at the top of the first page using their email address, password, and complete basic steps to register test.

- Remind staff that they should remember their login and password

**Step 4:** Provide the staff their test tube when prompted; confirm it is the correct person taking the test

- If someone does not remember their password, they would simply hit the "forgot password" button and reset in the email they provided to register.
- Everyone on site should make sure that they are logging in on the "[covid.vlt.co](https://COVID.VLT.CO)" site.

**Step 5:** Staff complete the saliva test

**Step 6:** Verify test tube has appropriate amount of sample

**Step 7:** Direct staff to cover the test tube, shake the solution for 5 seconds and place in biohazard bag.

**Step 8:** Ensure all tests are in the biohazard bag and get the package ready to mail.

- Place up to 50 completed tubes per large biohazard bag

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- Place 1 biohazard bag of 50 tubes in 1 UPS bag

**Step 9:** Complete collection report at <https://survey.mn.gov/s.asp?k=160531255041>.

**Step 10:** Drop off the tests at a UPS Store or UPS Drop Box (note collection times if using Drop Box). Drop off must be at a store or box, **not** a UPS access point.

Find a store nearby: <https://www.theupsstore.com/tools/find-a-store>.

*Results are typically available to individuals at the email or phone provided within 48 hours of being received.*

# Helpful information and support

## Troubleshooting

- Staff are re-directed to a Vault webpage that asks them the address for kits to be mailed or other non-relevant questions. This is likely a result of saved cookies on their device and a re-direct based on base usage and traffic on Vault's website from the individual device. Staff should:
  - Close the browser and open a private browser on the smartphone or tablet. Start over by typing in COVID.VLT.CO into browser.
  - Alternatively, staff can go to the web address and re-enter manually the link (COVID.VLT.CO).
- Common errors with the first page, example: "it will not allow me to click next." Double check:
  - Birthday: Ensure the year was typed correctly (ex. 1964 instead of 0064 or the date instead of their date of birth). If the user typed 2020 instead of their birth year, the website will then ask for a photo ID of a guardian. Click the back button at the upper left of the screen and change the birth year.
  - Ethnicity and race: Users must select an option in **both** categories.
- If the internet connection gets lost or the webpage is taking too long to load, remind the user that their information is not lost. They will need to go to covid.vlt.co and log-in again. Then click "finish my order" to pick-up where they left off.
- Participant doesn't have an email address:
  - **All** participants must register using a unique email address
  - If a participant does not have an email address; they can create a fake email address: [childcare+firstlastname@vaulthealth.com](mailto:childcare+firstlastname@vaulthealth.com)
  - Participants will receive a phone call with results; they can also log into their account to see the results at [www.vaulthealth.com](http://www.vaulthealth.com) using the dummy email address and the password they created.
- Error when scanning a barcode:
  - Double check the barcode numbers match the collection tube
  - If scanned try typing in the numbers, if typed try scanning
  - Try tapping "NEXT" again
  - Set kit aside and try another kit
- Health Insurance Issues:
  - If an individual has insurance, they should enter it as this allows the state to access funding. If insurance does not cover the test, the state will pay for the cost.
  - If participant does not have their insurance card with them, they must enter "no" when asked
  - BCBS of Minnesota = Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota
  - Medicare: skip group number and just enter member number
- Staff did not receive their test results:

- Results are at [www.vaulthealth.com](http://www.vaulthealth.com), then use their email address and the password to login as completed during testing process.
- These tests are intended for child care providers and staff. If you have received approval from the Education and Child Care COVID Response Workgroup to use the kits on families, note the following:
  - All participants must have a unique email so if you have a family with children, multiple emails will be needed (one per person). Vault Health is working on simplifying this process.
  - Minors: will be asked to upload a photo ID of their parent/guardian for identification.
- Storing samples: The tests are not temperature sensitive and do not need to be refrigerated
- What to do with a vial that needs to be disposed of because an error code, it was dropped on floor, or a staff member can't produce enough saliva, etc.?
  - Place blue cap onto vial and place in a sharps container. If relevant, use a new kit.
- Ordering additional kits: The state will track your utilization based on your [collection reports](#) completed every other week. Additionally, when completing these reports, you will be asked if additional kits are needed (likely after 3-4 rounds) and have an opportunity to order.

## Additional support

For questions about self-administering the tests, a Registered Nurse will be available in a zoom room **Monday - Friday: 6:30 - 9:30 a.m.**

- Zoom link: <https://vaulthealth.zoom.us/j/5330756419>

For questions about the website/technology, a hotline number to reach a Vault (COVID-19 testing company) representative is available during business hours: **Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

- Phone number: **(929) 205-6741**

Vault can be reached for questions about results at [mn@vaulthealth.com](mailto:mn@vaulthealth.com) or 800-800-5698

## Resources

- [What to Do When Notified of a Lab-Confirmed Case of COVID-19 in Child Care Settings](#) – If your staff member notifies you of a positive test result, please use this document to guide you through next steps. With increased COVID-19 case growth in Minnesota, it can take a few days to hear from local or state public health.
- [Testing Flyer to Display](#) – Use this testing flyer to help answer questions from families about testing availability and encourage more widespread testing in your child care community.
- **Information on the screening testing program to share with families** – Email [covid.childcare@state.mn.us](mailto:covid.childcare@state.mn.us) to request a letter from the state that can be shared with families about your participation in the program.

## Appendix A: Collection Report

Collection report should be completed via survey:

<https://survey.mn.gov/s.asp?k=160531255041>

If you experience trouble submitting the survey, please send in the information to the right after each testing day to:

[covid.childcare@state.mn.us](mailto:covid.childcare@state.mn.us)

### Testing Collection Report

#### Saliva Testing Pilot Program

Thank you for your leadership and efforts to support child care providers and staff and priorit testing access. Please submit your regular collection report below. If you have questions, please email [covid.childcare@state.mn.us](mailto:covid.childcare@state.mn.us).

Q1 Is your program a Head Start program?

No

Q3 Select the name of your program or facility from the dropdown menu:

If there are multiple facilities with the same name, please check the zipcode at the end to ensure you select

--Click Here--

If your facility does not appear in the list above, please enter facility name and zip code:

#### Saliva Testing Pilot Program

##### Create a collection report:

Collection Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Facility Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Coordinator Name and Number:

\_\_\_\_\_

Number of Employees Tested: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Others Tested: \_\_\_\_\_

Starting # of Kits: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Samples Collected: \_\_\_\_\_

Defective/Discarded Kits: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Kits Remaining: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Email after each testing day to: [covid.childcare@state.mn.us](mailto:covid.childcare@state.mn.us)